



USEU SNAPSHOTS

WORKING TOGETHER, SHARING INTERESTS

(A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE U.S. MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION)



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Secretary of State Clinton Engages European Youth at Town Hall



Photo: European Parliament President Pöttering introduces Secretary Clinton at the Town Hall. (Photo: Marijke Hendrickx)

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton took time from a full schedule of meetings with NATO and EU leaders to meet young professionals and interns working at the European Union, NATO, and Belgian organizations in a “town-hall” discussion. Pointing to the “huge enthusiasm, great excitement, and enormous goodwill in Europe” toward the new U.S. Administration, European Parliament President Hans-Gert Pöttering welcomed Secretary Clinton, and called on the U.S. and Europe to work together on “the central challenges of our time, whether it be the defense of our common values, peace in the Middle East, climate change, energy security, or economic governance. There is a huge practical agenda for us to develop together. We are keen to begin work immediately.” Secretary Clinton agreed. “The economic crisis and terrorism, climate change, and energy security, the threat of pandemic disease, human trafficking – there is so much that we have to seriously address,” she said. “But I am an optimist,” she continued, “and I am confident that we are up to the task. Every generation faces the challenges of its

time. Some do better than others in responding. This is one of those moments in history where we don’t have a choice. We have to come together, and we have to put our best minds to work.” Over 400 people filled the hall, while others lined the walls, balconies and staircases. Hundreds more watched the live event in overflow spaces, on Parliament TV, and via webstreaming at U.S. embassies throughout Europe.

Europe’s Youth Has High Expectations for the Future of U.S.-EU Relations

The U.S. Mission to the EU hosted a half-day conference, entitled “*Transitions in Power: Obama and the EU - Finding Common Ground on Common Issues*”, for 41 interns from the European Commission and Council on February 25. Opening remarks were given by USEU Chargé d’Affaires Christopher Murray. A dual presentation by the Mission’s Political Minister Counselor Christopher Davis and the Council of the EU’s Administrator of Transatlantic Relations, Dr. Christiane Höhn, drew the participants into a discussion of expectations for the Obama administration in Europe. Finally, the group broke up into smaller roundtables on climate change, the economic crisis and law enforcement cooperation, led by USEU officials. Our intern guests were knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and pointed in their questions on the “hot topics” in transatlantic relations. USEU Public Affairs intern Rachel Miller organized the March meeting. The next exchange with EU interns will take place this summer.



Photo: Chargé d’Affaires Murray (standing) addresses the interns. In the foreground, left to right, are USEU interns Rachel Miller and Peter Dubrowski. (Photo: Marijke Hendrickx)

Down Memory Lane in Liège 40 Years Later



Photo: Christopher Davis and Rotary Club President Marc Dykmans (Photo: Marc Grondal, Liège Rotary Club member)

Former Rotary International Scholar, USEU Political Minister Counselor Christopher Davis returned for the first time, on March 16, to the Rotary Club which hosted him during his 1969-1970 academic year at the University of Liège. He regaled the 50 members with reflections on how his year as a student in Belgium affected his subsequent career.

Recalling a speech he gave before the Liège club 40 years ago on the student movement in the U.S. during the 1960s, Mr. Davis said that many of the issues inspiring campus activism then – the Vietnam war, the environment, race relations, and mutually assured destruction (“MAD”) – have unfortunate resonances today. The MAD Cold War nuclear standoff, for

example, has given way to an even more dangerous situation with proliferation of nuclear weapons technology to North Korea, Iran, and South Asia. As for war, Davis spoke of the seriousness with which Obama administration officials want to consult with European allies to coordinate approaches to Afghanistan and raise awareness with European publics about the stakes there. He also spoke of his continued friendship or renewed contact with people he met in Liège, and about how he experienced the Vietnam draft lottery and the first landing on the moon with his Belgian acquaintances back then.



Photo: Christopher Davis (second from the left), two other American Rotary fellows on either end, and Mrs. Remouchamps and her daughter Colette in the middle.

Vice President Biden Visits Brussels



Photo: Vice President Biden with EU High Representative Javier Solana.
(Photo: Marijke Hendrickx)

Vice President Joe Biden visited Brussels March 10 to consult with EU High Representative Javier Solana, Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Czech Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg, whose country holds the European Union presidency. Biden also met with the NATO Secretary-General, the Belgian Prime

Minister and representatives from several non-NATO nations participating in the 41-nation International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

The Vice President's visit was part of the Obama administration's effort to engage America's allies and partners worldwide in supporting Afghanistan, a top foreign policy priority for President Obama.

"Bright Green" Business Forum

At the beginning of March, USEU Commercial Service staff participated in a week-long American Chamber of Commerce briefing for American Chambers in EU member states to inform them about EU priorities and developments in Brussels. Senior Commercial Officer Robert Connan spoke on a panel discussing the Obama administration's impact on U.S. business and transatlantic relations and highlighted the significance of the March visit of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

He also discussed the resurgence of climate change as a shared priority for the United States and the EU and its impact



on transatlantic trade, especially in green/clean technology. One example, he said, was an event taking place in Copenhagen in parallel with the COP15 Climate Change Conference in December

2009, called the "Bright Green" business forum. This forum will highlight companies offering climate change solutions from all over the world, including a USA pavilion showcasing U.S. technologies.

USAID Officials Meet with Commission Counterparts to Discuss Africa



Photo: USAID

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) officials from Washington, Brussels and West Africa met with European Commission counterparts representing EuropeAid and the Directorate-General for Development to discuss

coordinated approaches toward promoting regional integration in sub-Saharan Africa. The meeting, held in Brussels on February 20, aimed at promoting a common agenda for strengthening regional institutions in Africa and advancing economic integration. While this meeting focused on regional integration, participants also agreed that the discussion could help form the basis for a EU-U.S. dialogue on a broader range of development issues.

Strengthening Civil Society in the Transatlantic Economic Dialogue

USEU is working with civil society groups to raise their level of involvement in promoting integration of the transatlantic economies. The Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), the primary venue for broad U.S.-EU discussion on overcoming regulatory divergences and bringing our economies closer together, was created in 2007 under the Transatlantic Economic Framework (TEF), which established a range of economic issues for U.S.-EU discussion and collaboration. The cabinet-level TEC has convened three times, most recently in December 2008. Three advisory groups were set up to represent stakeholder interests in the TEC/TEF processes; these groups are the Transatlantic Business, Consumer and Legislators' dialogues.

Civil society groups had complained of having a limited voice in setting the TEC agenda. To remedy this, USEU is seeking consumer and other civil society groups' views on how to improve the TEC structure and better incorporate consumer and citizen issues into the transatlantic economic discussion. Toward this end, USEU Economic staff met with the Transatlantic Consumers' Dialogue in February, and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC, a civil society advisory group to the European Union) in March. Both groups welcomed the outreach and were encouraged by the Obama Administration's commitment to deepen our engagement with Europe on economic issues. Both also recommended that the TEC/TEF agenda focus on broad, strategic economic issues such as financial crisis responses, energy, and climate change. The groups will make additional suggestions shortly, and USEU will continue to work with these and other civil society groups in coming months, in preparation for a possible TEC meeting in May or June.